



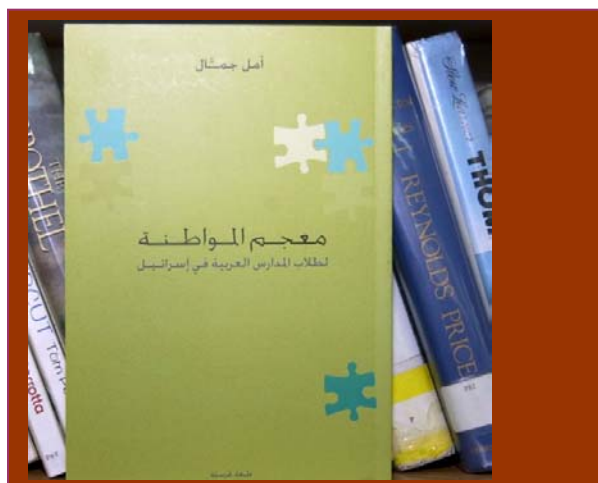
The Middle East Partnership Initiative

Arab Graduate Students Produce Arabic Dictionary on Democracy

January 2006

A MEPI small grant from Embassy Tel Aviv helped underwrite the production of a lexicon in Arabic defining 100 terms of democracy and democratic governance as well as concepts specific to the Israeli context and Arab-Jewish relations in Israel. Working for a year in a graduate seminar, the Arabic-speaking students of Hebrew University in Jerusalem conceived, initiated and composed the lexicon that is unique in both its content and methodology. The MEPI grant empowered the Arab graduate students to pursue the selection of terms for inclusion and then to discuss them and elaborate the definitions throughout the seminar.

Published by the University's Gilo Center, the dictionary is the first effort at the university level in Israel by a totally Arabic-speaking seminar to create a resource that can be widely used in Arabic-speaking class-rooms across the country. The dictionary also is attracting the



attention of teachers, educators, and academics who see in it a potential tool for teachers and students to bring their Arab - Israeli perspective and experience to key terms in democratic governance and civil society activism as well as to relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. The lexicon draws upon

community precepts and, with wide use in Arab sector schools, could be a powerful tool in reinforcing these concepts and reforming the way that educators frame their presentation. Among the terms in the lexicon are citizenship, the Supreme Court, flag, participation in elections, human dignity, reconciliation, pluralism, the will of the people, etc.

Some of the graduate students are training to become civics teachers and have expressed hope that the lexicon can be a valuable tool in civics education throughout the region.

MEPI is a Presidential initiative that supports economic, political, and educational reform efforts and women's empowerment in the Middle East and expanded opportunity for all people of the region.

U.S. Department of State

www.mepi.state.gov

Tel. 001-202-776-8500

Fax 001-202-776-8445